join in the dance, which consists of simple, rhythmical steps or hops. As the dancers become tired, they drop out of line one by one, and eventually the shaman may be left dancing alone.

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IN preparation for the actual burial festivities, the Bororo ornament themselves elaborately and with meticulous care. They paint their faces and bodies with a variety of fantastic designs in different colors, and may plaster their hair with the red urucú paint. Some wear skirts, capes, and head wreaths made from palm leaves. Hair that was torn out in mourning is spun into cords that are braided and wound around the head in the fashion of a turban. Other striking decorations are chest ornaments made from the claws of the giant armadillo; bird beaks worn as pendants; necklaces of jaguar teeth; chaplets made of a beautiful local flower that resembles our morning glory; and enormous "sunburst crown" feather headdresses, which sometimes incorporate the tail feathers of as many as thirty macaws. These spectacular headdresses are highly prized by the Bororo, because macaws are now scarce in their forests. They will part with one to an outsider only in exchange for a gun.

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One of the highlights of the Bororo funeral ceremony is the impersonation of mythical beasts by men dressed in various costumes and performing imitative dances. Two such creatures inspect the corpse about two weeks after its interment in the plaza. Disguised with leaves of the buriti palm, they circle the grave several times. Finally they stop and open it to check the state of the body's decomposition. Their decision is known in advance: the flesh has not yet decayed enough to be removed from the bones. The grave is closed, and the festivities continue.

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ANOTHER mythical creature is represented by a man whose body is painted white with clay, and who wears feathers in his nose. This beast impersonator runs again and again around the spot where the corpse is buried, trying to call the dead person's soul out of the grave. During this performance, other men in the group shake split bamboo poles, producing a sharp clapping sound.

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Still another beast impersonator emerges from behind the huts, and rushing across the plaza toward the grave, beats it with a long stick in a

[p. 45-A] [text continues on p. 45-C]

8:Kozak C-8 (ca. 1954) 1963
SP8 Bororo SP8

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renewed effort to call forth the spirit of the dead Bororo.

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The ritual dances of the Bororo depict in lively and vigorous fashion many aspects of their relations with the spirit world. All the dances take place in the village plaza, and most of them continue for hours at a time, requiring tremendous physical endurance. As one by one the dancers become exhausted, they drop out of line. Weary and covered with perspiration, each one squats unceremoniously on the shallow grave, while someone pours a pot of water over him. These shower baths have a twofold purpose: they refresh the dancers and also moisten the ground, thus hastening decomposition of the body.

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Before the dancers return to strenuous activity, they may sip palm "wine." This weakly fermented beverage is prepared from sap of the *acuri* palm, a tree that grows in profusion near the village. To collect the sap, a man climbs to the top of the tree and cuts off the uppermost fronds. Next, his wife ascends and, with a shell, scrapes the pith from the heart of the

[p.45-c]